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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 189th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 7 July 1992, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT OF ALGERIA

1. The CHAIRMAN, on behalf of the Committee, expressed sympathy to the Government of Algeria in connection with the tragic death of the President of Algeria.

2. On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf, President of Algeria.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. The agenda was adopted.

REPORT ON THE UNITED NATIONS NORTH AMERICAN SEMINAR AND NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, HELD AT NEW YORK FROM 22 TO 26 JUNE 1992

4. Mr. CAMILLERI (Malta), Rapporteur, who had served as Chairman of both meetings, said that, for the Seminar, the Committee had decided to focus on a single theme, namely, "Enforcing the fourth Geneva Convention for ensuring the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem". The opening session had been addressed by the President of the General Assembly, the Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Public Affairs on behalf of the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations and the Rapporteur himself, in addition to the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group, the representative of Egypt and the representatives of the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. A total of 4 meetings had been held and 7 eminent experts from North America, Palestine and Israel had presented papers. Representatives of 51 Governments, 9 United Nations specialized agencies, 3 intergovernmental organizations and 14 non-governmental organizations had attended the meeting.

5. The discussions had covered all aspects of the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, as well as the responsibility of each high contracting party to ensure respect for the provisions of the Convention. In their conclusions and recommendations, participants had taken note of persistent violations of the Convention by Israel, the occupying Power, especially through intensified illegal settlement. They had declared that it was the duty of the high contracting parties to ensure respect by Israel for its obligations under the Convention and had noted that Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 681 (1990) had requested the Secretary-General to develop further the idea of convening a meeting of the high contracting parties and to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation and to

(Mr. Camilleri, Malta)

report periodically on the matter. They had urged further action pursuant to the provisions of those resolutions. The participants had suggested that the high contracting parties should utilize their consular presence for monitoring purposes and that a United Nations monitoring organization should be established through which the parties would carry out their responsibilities under article 1 of the Convention. They had recommended that the idea of seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice should be developed further and that concrete support should be requested from non-governmental organizations. They had expressed their deep appreciation to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Finally, they had expressed the hope that the Seminar would result in effective action by the United Nations and the international community to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people under occupation.

6. Turning to the Ninth North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, he said that around 200 representatives of 84 non-governmental organizations, three NGO coordinating committees, 15 Governments, two intergovernmental organizations and one other organization had attended. He had addressed the opening session, and a message had been received from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and Moderator of the Symposium also had made a statement. The theme had been "Peace is the Fruit of Justice, 25 years of Occupation". Two panels had discussed the topics "25 years of Occupation: Overcoming the Obstacles" and "Preparing the Way for Palestine", respectively. There had also been a "teach-in" on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a resource fair, and eight workshops. One of the recommendations emerging from the workshops was that North American non-governmental organizations should intensify their mobilization efforts and continue to raise public awareness of the needs of Palestinian children and the plight of prisoners and expelled persons. They had also recommended that issues related to the problems of Palestinians living in Israel should be addressed. The peace process should be promoted with members of Congress, Jewish organizations and the general public, and special assistance programmes for women also should be developed.

7. Both the Seminar and the Symposium, which had coincided with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Israeli occupation and the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Lebanon, had enabled members and observers of the Committee and non-governmental organizations to analyse the current situation, to evaluate the strategies pursued thus far and to discuss new strategies for the future.

8. The reports of both meetings would be issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and a brief account also would be included in the monthly bulletin prepared by the Division. In addition, in accordance with past practice, the conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar would be annexed to the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

9. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to take note of the report on the seminar.

10. It was so decided.

UNITED NATIONS EUROPEAN SEMINAR ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE TO BE HELD AT MALTA FROM 27 TO 29 JULY 1992

11. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had before it Working Paper No. 5, containing the draft programme for that seminar. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the draft programme as contained in Working Paper No. 5.

12. It was so decided.

13. The CHAIRMAN read out the list of the members of the Committee delegation to be sent to the seminar.

OTHER MATTERS

14. The CHAIRMAN said that, since the dates of the European NGO Symposium and the International NGO Meeting overlapped partially with the summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Committee had attempted to change the dates, but it was impossible. Therefore, the Bureau would hold consultations on the composition of the delegation in order to ensure that the Committee would be represented until the last day of those meetings.

15. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) expressed his condolences to the delegation of Algeria on the tragic death of its President. With respect to the Seminar and the Symposium, he congratulated those who had made possible the success of those meetings and noted especially the importance of the theme selected, the necessity of protecting the Palestinian people of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. He also appreciated the efforts of the members of the Committee and the participants. With reference to changes being introduced in some United Nations bodies, it was essential to examine methods for ensuring the maximum efficiency in the work of the Committee. He therefore proposed that the matter should be considered and perhaps informal meetings held. It must be borne in mind that the summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to be held before the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, would have a direct bearing on the resolutions which the Assembly would adopt. Therefore, the Committee must be in a position to face those possibilities and adapt to change. His delegation was available to anyone who wished to hold bilateral or multilateral consultations on the subject.

16. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which had just been held in Dakar, Senegal, said that the questions of the Middle East and Palestine had been considered by the Council of Ministers of OAU. Several ministers had expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian and Arab cause. After hearing the report of the

(The Chairman)

Secretary-General of OAU, he had made a statement on behalf of Senegal and had presented the Committee's point of view. The Council of Ministers had adopted a resolution at the end of the meeting. During the summit meeting, Mr. Yasser Arafat had made a statement behind closed doors to African Heads of State or Government. All that documentation would be included in the monthly bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.